



*Building Better Services for Children and Youth who are Victims or Witnesses of Crime in Canada
Prestation de services améliorés aux enfants et aux adolescents qui ont été victimes ou témoins d'actes criminels au Canada*

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT SERVING CHILD VICTIMS & WITNESSES IN NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

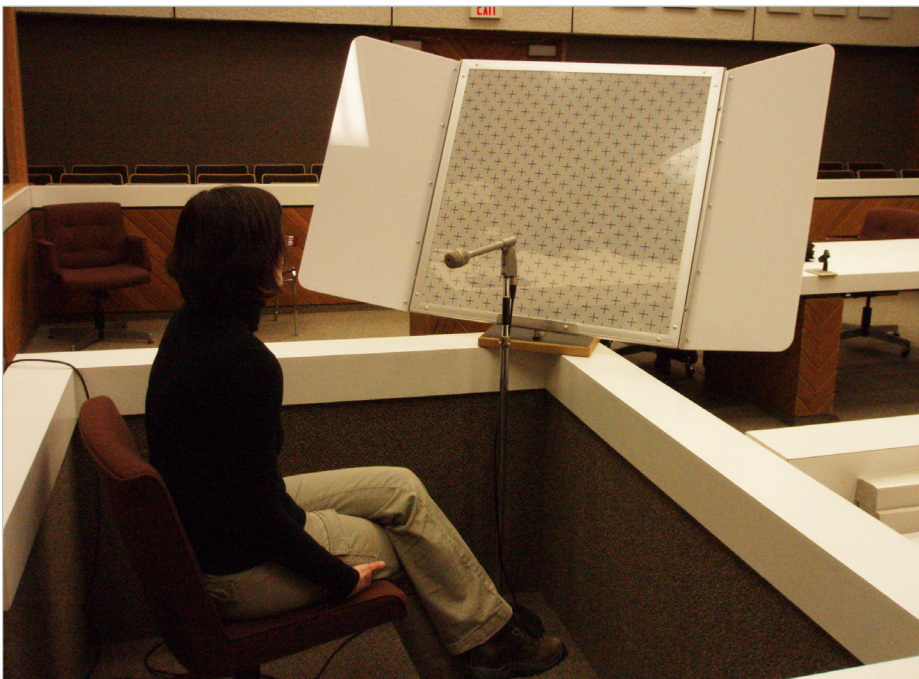
Children are served in two communities – Inuvik and Yellowknife – by both crown based and community based victim services. Children are served in person from 5 other community based victim services programs in Fort Good Hope, Behchoko, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson.

In the remaining 26 NWT communities, victim services can provide outreach upon request, as resources allow. Otherwise, other organizations, such as the Public Prosecution Services of Canada, RCMP, other Department personnel, non-government organizations, family and friends play a major role in supporting child victims and witnesses.

SUCCESS STORY #1:

Witness Screens .

The Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Justice, in concert with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "G" Division, applied to and received funding from the Department of Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victims Issues to purchase 21 vulnerable witness screens for use in court with child and other vulnerable witnesses.



A youth witness in Northwest Territories gives her testimony from behind a witness screen, which allows the accused to see her, but saves her from the stress of having to look at the accused in court.

Use of vulnerable witness screens can help make it possible for child witnesses to give a full and candid account to the court, of their experience as victims or witnesses of alleged crimes. Vulnerable witness screens are located in all 20 communities where court is held in the NWT.

SUCCESS STORY #2:

Facilitate Child Testimony training in Inuvik and Yellowknife.

The Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Justice, the Department of Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victims Issues, the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "G" Division, and the Inuvik Justice Committee joined in partnership to sponsor "Using Special Accommodations and Testimonial Aids to Facilitate Child Testimony" training in Inuvik and Yellowknife. This training, facilitated by Pamela Hurley, the then Director of the Child Witness Project Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System, in London Ontario, was attended by over 60 participants including victim services workers, social workers, RCMP, crown attorneys, victim services workers, crown witness coordinators, counsellors and a FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) specialist. At the training participants learned

about why there needs to be a different justice system response to child victims and witnesses, whose needs are different than those of adult witnesses. They learned about the range of testimonial aids available, how to assess the need for their use and how to use them singly or in combination.

CHALLENGES

- Coordination of services to child victims and witnesses between all the different players involved; and communication protocols between these different players
- Geography; language; history; social determinants of health and well being
- Children living with developmental disabilities (FASD – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder); impacted by multiple offences
- Resourcing; range of resources available; accessibility to resources; appropriateness of resources
- Secondary victimization as a trauma, challenges in system to respond
- Service providers are impacted by trauma